



GRAFT

FREDERIC ISHAM

Each Episode Suggested by a Prominent Author
Serialization by HUGH WEIR and JOE BRANDT
Produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company
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SYNOPSIS.

Dudley Larnigan, district attorney, because of his fight on the vice and liquor trusts, is killed by an agent of a secret society, the committee of fifteen. The fight is continued by his son, Bruce, who is elected district attorney, and by another son, Tom. Bruce is in love with Dorothy Maxwell, whose father is head of the insurance trust.

FINAL EPISODE

The Milk Battle

Suggested by
FREDERIC S. ISHAM, Author of
"The Strollers," "Under the Rose,"
"Aladdin From Broadway,"
Etc.

"Is there a chance for his recovery?" The doctor, who was bending over the side of the wheeled chair, shook his head slowly as he looked up at the young woman who had asked him the question.

"I won't try to deceive you or raise false hopes, which may never be realized, Miss Maxwell. Mr. Larnigan is in a very critical condition. Death may come any day. The best we can do is to hope and pray."

A sturdy, thoughtful man of perhaps thirty-five waved his hand toward her from an automobile, which had drawn up beside the gate.

"Good morning Miss Maxwell. And how is our patient today?"
"About the same, Mr. Harding," said the young woman sadly, as he assisted her to a seat beside him.

Robert Harding, Bruce's lawyer cousin, reached over and patted her arm gently.

"There is one thing that I am going to do, Miss Dorothy, and in which you can give me real assistance. I am going to continue the battle against the graft trust where Bruce left off, and I am going to fight to the death!"

The girl impulsively caught his hand. Harding told the girl that he had induced wealthy philanthropists to finance a milk company that would fight the milk trust.

Six weeks passed—six strenuous weeks on the part of Robert Harding and the newly organized People's Milk Supply company. The People's Milk company as a legitimate, sound business enterprise was coming into its own, but it was increasingly plain that the mysterious opposition it was receiving would stop at nothing to put it permanently out of commission. For instance, the prices of the trust began to drop steadily, so steadily, in fact, that from a financial viewpoint it became impossible for Harding and his associates to meet them.

Harding called a hurried meeting of his associates in his private office and the men responded with dubious faces, for the venture had already cost a considerable amount. "Gentlemen," announced Harding, coming to the point without delay, "we are here because we are confronted with a grave crisis in our affairs. Unless we can raise more immediate cash and are prepared to continue our operations for the near future at a loss I fear that we must decide that our project is a failure."

In a short time \$150,000 was realized, and Harding was delighted.

He telephoned the good news to Dorothy Maxwell, who received it with

a thoughtful face. For a few moments she paced the floor of her room nervously. She knew in her own mind that the milk trust was one of the branches of that sinister organization known as The Fifteen, of which her father, as head of the insurance trust, at one time had been a member. How could she use this fact to the advantage of Harding? She debated the question anxiously. Finally she called for her car, determined to drive to the office of the Independent, the newspaper which Bruce Larnigan controlled in the interests of his battles for the people.

Almost the first person she met in the editorial office was Robert Harding, who hurried toward her eagerly.

"I think I have found a way to help you," she said impulsively. "I have remembered that father has at home a book with the names of the members of The Fifteen and their secret by-words, minutes, and so on. That book ought to let us know who the mysterious head of the milk trust is. We can then force him to come out into the open."

"Good!" echoed Harding, with enthusiasm. "When you have the book let me know."

"I will," the girl promised, and then she caught her breath sharply. Just behind them stood Stanford Stone with a slight smile on his lips.

She felt that Stone was watching her intently as she passed out of the office, and she quickened her pace. But her mind was made up.

"I'll find the book," the girl decided, "and then take father to our home in the mountains. Mr. Harding can come there for it."

This decision made, she lost no time in carrying it out. Her search for the journal of the Fifteen was a short one, as she knew the book was in her father's private desk in the library and had not been removed since his seizure. With the little red covered book in her possession she rushed preparations for their departure to the mountains so hurriedly that by 9 o'clock that evening she and her father were on their way and a note had been sent to Harding telling him where he could reach them.

It was at 10 o'clock the next morning that Dorothy, reading to her father in the cheery living room of their little country home, glanced up to see the figure of Stanford Stone entering the rustic gate of the grounds. She stopped abruptly. The precious book was in the bosom of her dress, but she knew that Stone would stop at nothing, not even physical violence to her, to gain possession of it. Her glance traveled swiftly about the room. On a table lay her father's silk hat. With a quick movement Dorothy caught up the hat and slipped the book into the lining just as Stanford Stone was announced.

Dorothy spoke a few words of careless greeting to him and left him alone with her father. Hardly had the door closed behind her when Stone bounded from his chair and sprang to the side of Mr. Maxwell. There was murder in his eyes.

"Curse you!" he growled. "Where is that book?"

Terror sprang into the eyes of the helpless old man, and then came a fortunate interruption. Voices sounded from outside, and Dorothy and Robert Harding appeared. Stone quickly changed his attitude and was gently stroking Maxwell's hair when the couple entered the room.

"I am going to take your father into the grounds for a little air, Miss Dorothy," he said. Catching up Maxwell's hat, to the girl's dismay, he caught the handle of the wheel chair and pushed it ahead of him.

Stone escorted Maxwell to the edge of the grounds without uttering a word, his mouth set in a hard, grim line. A gang of laborers had been at work on a rustic bridge spanning a high gully, at the bottom of which gushed an angry little torrent. Stone pushed Maxwell's chair out on to the edge of the bridge and glanced about him swiftly, debating as to the best method to force speech from the closed lips. A man in overalls was occupied in removing some of the old planks from the center of the bridge preparatory to substituting new and stronger ones. As Stone watched him the man put on his hat and started off whistling, evidently for nails or tools to complete his task, leaving a gaping hole perhaps

six feet across.

Hardly was the laborer out of sight when Stone darted toward the opening thus exposed and hastily pulled back into place the old boards, adjusting them in such a way that they would be dislodged with the slightest weight placed upon them. As Stone strolled back to the chair Dorothy and Harding appeared from the house. Stone scowled, and then, turning his back, idly dropped Maxwell's hat over the bridge to determine the distance to the water below and ascertain whether a fall through the rotten timbers of the bridge would be fatal.

"I thought you might like to see Mr. Harding for a few minutes, father, before he goes. But where is your hat? You will catch cold."

"I am afraid, Miss Maxwell, that it is up to me to get your father a new hat," broke in Stanford Stone. "I accidentally knocked it off the bridge."

"Will you help me to the rescue, Mr. Harding?" asked Dorothy, pointing to the hat and ignoring Stone. Harding followed the direction of her pointing hand, saw the hat on the farther edge of the chasm-like ravine and offered his arm to the girl to help her across the bridge. She accepted with a little smile, and the two stepped on to the planks, while Stone drove back with a cold face. If they reached the middle of the bridge the two would plunge to their deaths through the rotten planks he had arranged.

Stone calmly drew out a cigarette and lighted it. And then he dropped the match with an imprecation. Something had made Dorothy Maxwell pause suddenly, wheel squarely about and stare back at her father.

"There is something on your mind, dad!" cried Dorothy. "There is something you are trying to tell me and can't. Oh, what is it?"

For a horrible moment the lips of Maxwell worked convulsively, but no words came from them.

Again the lips of the paralytic worked with frantic eagerness, and now as the girl bent pitiously nearer she heard husky, broken words.

"Don't cross the bridge, daughter—if you—value—your—life!"

Dorothy sprang to her feet and whirled toward the spot where Stanford Stone had been standing. But he was gone.

Harding was aroused by a voice from the direction of the yard. He turned and saw the figure of a man who ordi-



"Curse you!" he growled. "Where is that book?"

narily would have passed as a prosperous merchant, but who was now in a plainly disheveled condition.

"My name is Burrows, John Burrows," said the newcomer, advancing and speaking in a thin, nervous voice. "I am the president of the Consolidated Milk Supply company. You are ruining me, Mr. Harding, with your ruinous price reductions in the city milk supply. I have come to ask you what terms you are willing to give and call off your fight!"

"Terms?" snapped Harding, clenching his fists. "Do you think that I would stoop to make terms with a man of your type, Burrows? You are one of the miserable, despicable grafters of the Secret Fifteen. You are a man whom every decent citizen should be ashamed to see at liberty. You are one of the men responsible for the condition of poor Bruce Larnigan and for God knows how many more crimes! I shall tear you and yours limb from limb before I am through!"

Impulsively Harding started toward the other, and quickly Burrows turned, with stark terror in his eyes, and ran straight out over the bridge. Dorothy cried out to him to come back, but the man either did not hear or was afraid to stop. On he dashed until suddenly he reached the rotten planks in the center and plunged with a wild shriek through the opening down into the chasm below.

Dorothy sank back into Harding's arms, sobbing pitiously, with the doomed man's shriek still ringing in her ears. Another of the Fifteen had paid the penalty of the Larnigan vengeance.

With the death of Burrows came the collapse, final and irrevocable, of the graft trust.

Realizing that they plotted and fought in vain against the energetic crusaders, Bruce and Tom Larnigan and Robert Harding, ably assisted by Dorothy Maxwell, the survivors of

the formerly omnipotent Fifteen sought peace.

The terms were imposed by Bruce Larnigan, now happily recovering, and Robert Harding and were ratified by Tom Larnigan, returning from Brazil. These terms were severe, but just. All nefarious interference with the business of the country was stopped immediately. So far as possible restitution was made to the victims of the graft trust from the private fortunes of Stanford Stone, head and front of the graft trust, and his accomplices.

Naturally all this was not accomplished without much toll, for the ramifications of the graft trust's operations had extended far and wide into American life. But it was done, and then Stanford Stone, with a final malediction on the Larnigans and all connected with them, sailed for a long vacation in South America.

Dorothy Maxwell found a loving husband in Bruce Larnigan, and the two devoted themselves to making as comfortable as possible the few remaining years of her stricken father, who had, of course, been compelled to sever all connection with business. And Tom Larnigan, returning triumphantly from South America with much important evidence of smuggling for the government's secret service, was made happy by Kitty Rockford's acceptance of his proposal.

When Cows Sold at \$15.

How the increase in the cost of living has progressed in the last thirty or forty years was discussed by Gov. J. B. Kendrick of Wyoming, an old stockman, who has watched the march of events. Today a chicken is worth more than a turkey was a few years ago; a turkey more than a hog; a hog more than a cow used to be worth, and a cow more than a horse. This illustrates the increase in the price of food stock.

"In March, 1870, I went down to Texas to look over two thousand head of steers in Matagorda county, southern Texas," Governor Kendrick said, according to the Washington Post. "While I was down looking over the young cattle I was asked by the manager of the ranch if I cared to buy some older steers. The owner, I was told, had a number of six-year-old steers that he would sell, although he was not anxious. He was going to hold them until he got his price, he declared. The manager impressed upon me, however, that I need not hope to buy unless I was willing to pay the owner's price."

"I asked the price, and was told that he wanted fifteen dollars a head. Think of it—fifteen dollars a head for six-year-olds, and today calves are bringing eighty-five dollars."

Time Tables

Burlington Route

East Bound	
No. 56	12:11 a. m.
" 16	2:52 a. m.
" 12	9:14 a. m.
" 4	2:08 p. m.
" 14	2:38 p. m.

West Bound	
No. 17	1:04 a. m.
" 55	1:53 a. m.
" 3	8:50 a. m.
" 43	12:41 p. m.
" 15	6:28 p. m.

M. K. & T.

North Bound	
No. 22	11:20 p. m.
" 20	6:10 p. m.

South Bound	
No. 21	9:45 a. m.
" 25	5:18 p. m.

Wabash

No. 128, North Bound	11:07 p. m.
" 129, South Bound	4:48 p. m.

Wabash train No. 128 stops on signal for passengers for Quincy, Barry and points beyond. Train No. 129 stops on signal for passengers for Macon, Brunswick and points beyond.

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Dorothy Received the News With a Thoughtful Face.